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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0242
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0689
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NINEWA: TIGRIS BRIDGE CLOSURES SQUEEZE KURDISH
DELIVERIES TO THE WEST

Classified By: NINEWA PRT LEADER JASON HYLAND: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

¶1. (C/REL ACGU) Insurgent attacks in the last year on Tigris River bridges north of Mosul have constrained the Kurdish Democratic Party's (KDP) ability to deliver food and fuel from Dohuk province to the contested Sinjar District of Western Ninewa, in which the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) exerts major influence. Sinjar KDP leader Serbast, a powerful figure within the KDP hierarchy, told PRT Leader and Western Branch Office Chief in early February that these basic goods have to come south from Dohuk because insurgents control key transportation routes in the eastern part of the province. In an environment where western Ninewa's Sunni Arabs already suspect the KDP of political encroachment, the Kurdish party's facilitation of food and fuel deliveries from Dohuk - rather than Mosul - smacks of economic encroachment to the Arab community.

¶2. (C/REL ACGU) River crossings north of Mosul to the Syrian border are limited. Several key bridges north of the city were blown by insurgents in spring and fall 2007. The Mosul Dam crossing is limited to military vehicles to protect that structure, and a Kurdish bridge project upriver from the Mosul Dam is not yet complete. However the Kurds recently put in place a ribbon bridge to facilitate traffic movement from North to South. These bridges would not be so important if Sinjar received its food rations and fuel through Mosul, as do the majority Arab districts in southern Ninewa. However, because of a lack of good governance in western Ninewa and proper security on the trucking routes between Mosul and Sinjar, KDP leader Serbast said the food and fuel have to be delivered from the Kurdish provinces.

¶3. (C/REL ACGU) With the bridges to the Kurdish areas destroyed, Serbast said Sinjar does not receive enough food or fuel. In early February, he organized with local, Kurdish-led Iraqi Army units for a one-time convoy of 30 large food trucks to be delivered from Mosul. He said he expects at least one of the major bridges north of Mosul to be fixed "soon." (Note: If the Kurdish-led Ninewa provincial government truly is fixing at least one of the bridges, it would mark the first bridge reconstruction in the province since the crossings were first attacked in early 2007).

¶4. (C) COMMENT: PRT Leader has met KDP leader Serbast more than a half-dozen times, and he has never raised economic distress in Sinjar as a topic before. The fact that he focused his discussion on the current delivery problems

highlights just how much impact the destruction of specific
bridges has had on his lifeline to the KRG.
CROCKER